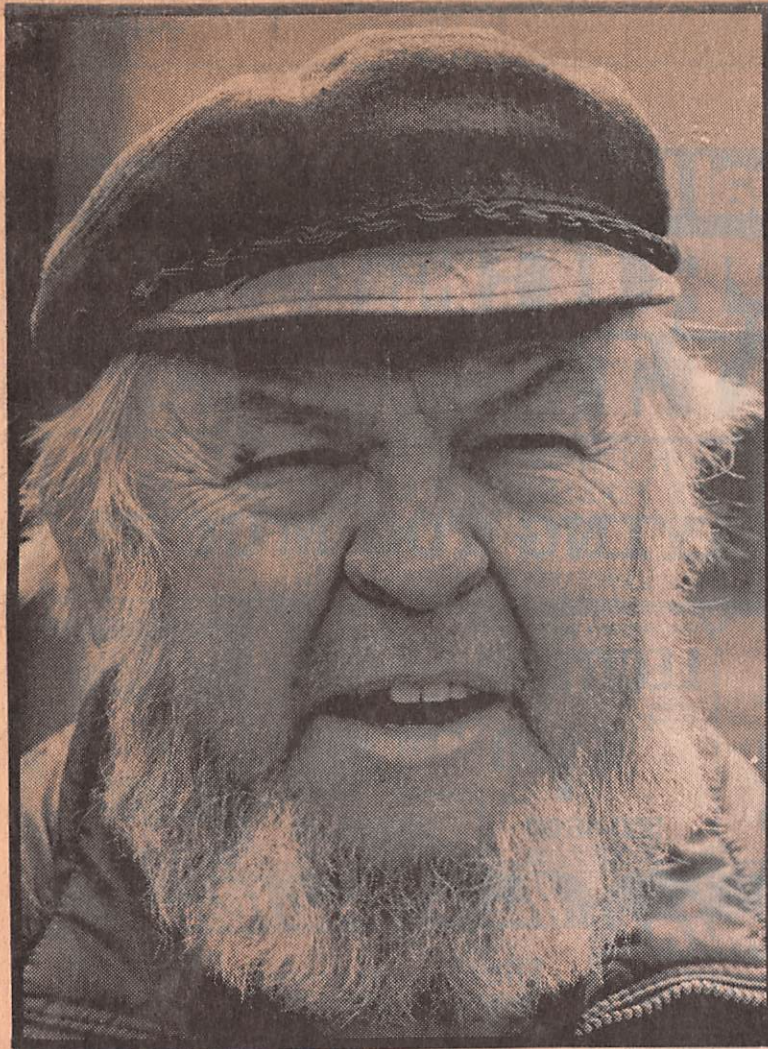


Photos — Layout: Steve Heiner



The 'Lure' of the Canyon

By ROD COLLETT
Associate Sports Editor

Sun 19 Aug 1984

Picture a hard-working businessman, sweat on his brow, struggling to meet the demands of daily pressures.

Now picture a quaint, flowing river nestled in a canyon dotted by an occasional fisherman.

This about describes the life of Gene Whiteaker, formerly of Pleasant Grove, now a resident of Provo Canyon.

He's still struggling to make a living with his wife Irene by his side, but life is much more relaxed, enjoyable and about as free and easy as the Provo River which flows nearby.

Whiteaker was part of the success story of Jolene's clothing company of Provo a few years ago. In fact, he was vice president in charge of production.

Now he lives the good life as proprietor of the Bait Box, a small building located just past the Vivian

Park turnoff and loaded with fishing goods — tackle, bait, line, lures, trinkets and flies.

Ah yes, flies.

The things which good fishing is made of. The kind of fishing that is exclusive to the upper Provo River, a stretch of water the Division of Wildlife Resources says is a natural fish habitat, loaded with native trout.

Big ones.

And the flies which Gene and Irene Whiteaker make at the Bait Box are as genuine to Utah and the Provo River as oil is to Texas.

It is Irene who is really responsible for the Whiteaker's moving to the good life in Provo Canyon. She is the one who taught her husband how to tie a fly, and she's the one who first opened the Bait Box as a novelty store, which eventually became a place tourists and local residents can stop by and get fishing advice and those famous flies.

When you first step into the Bait Box it's amazing how much fishing

tackle the Whiteakers have on display.

I purchased two wooly worms handmade by Gene. He says they work tremendously on the upper Provo River between Deer Creek Dam and the Murdock Diversion.

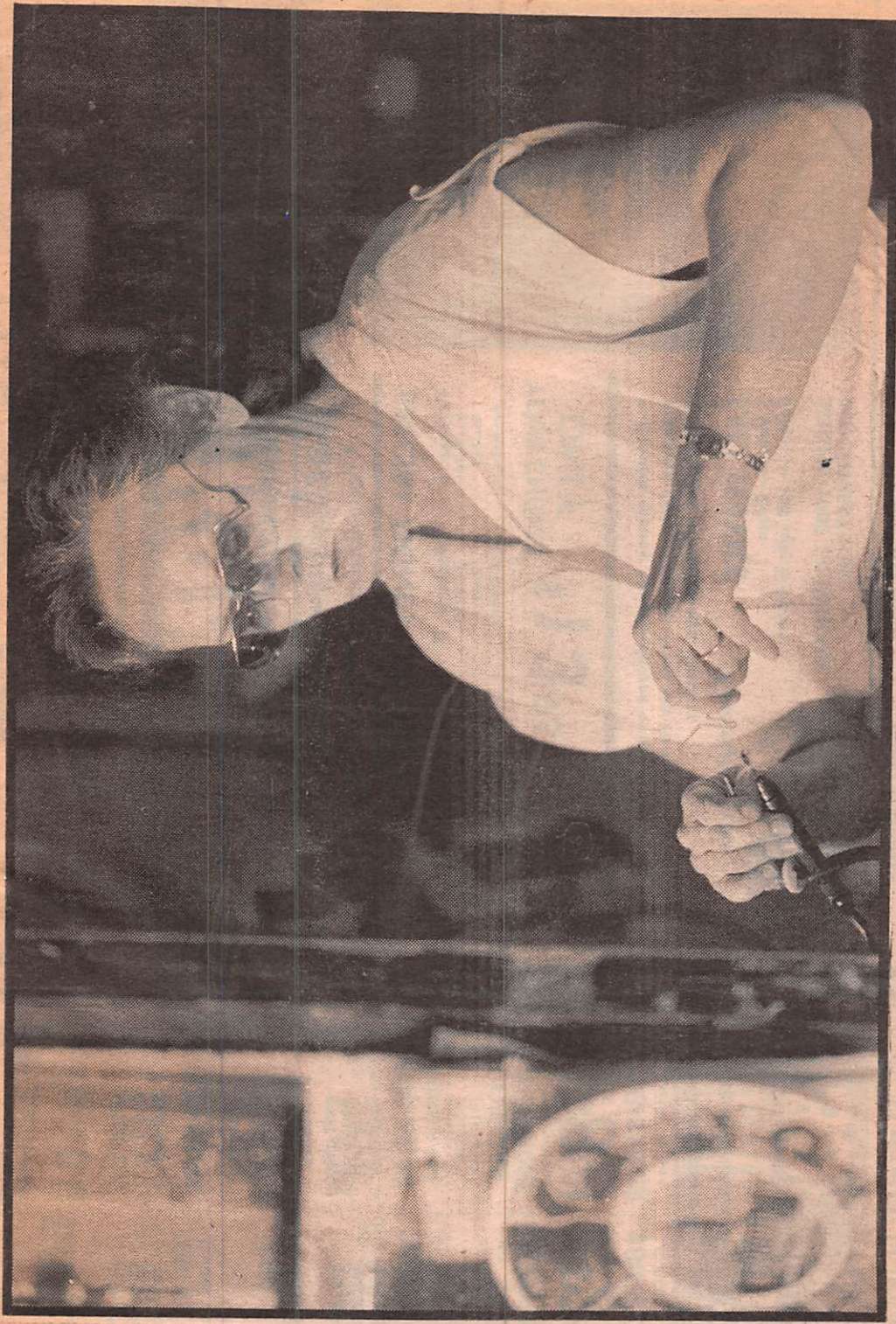
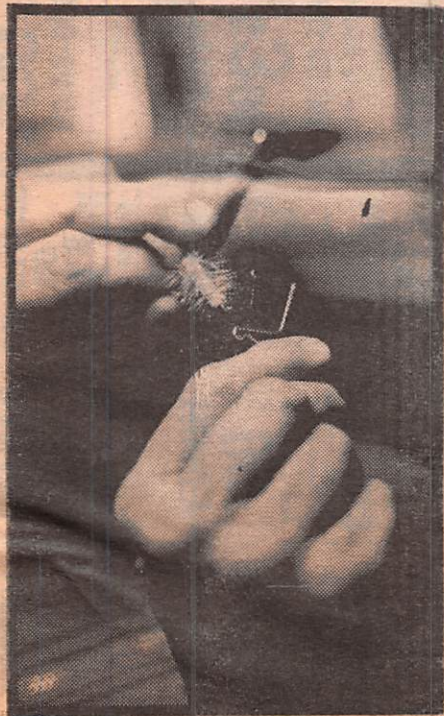
I've used other wooly worms (similar to a caterpillar) very successfully at Soldier Creek Reservoir.

"I would say a majority of our business is people passing through the canyon bound for the lakes and reservoirs," Gene said, pulling on his Captain Bligh look-a-like beard.

"But the river fishing is average for the average fisherman and excellent for those who really know what they're doing."

Speaking on the art of tie-flying, Gene said his wife deserves full credit for teaching him how to take some simple materials and five minutes later having a fly no fish could resist.

(See ANGLER on Page 34)



Irene Whiteaker first opened the novelty shop and taught her husband Gene how to tie flies.

Angler: He Prefers Fish to Finance

(Cont. from Page 33)

Some of the main ingredients in making a fly or wooly worm is a standard size single hook, some chenille for the body of the fly, a piece of yarn for the tail and a hackle (a hackle is a tuft of feathers from a rooster's neck).

"There is such a demand we often work all day just to keep up with number of flies we sell," Gene explained. "Sometimes we tie according to the demand of the customers. Some want regular flies or double renegades and others wooly worms. We've even been known to take a worn out fly from an angler and re-tie it, according to his specifications."

The Whiteakers find the canyon life suited to their style of living.

"I've always dreamed of doing this. There was no convincing to be done when it came to moving here. Plus, I decided that after 45 years in business, it was time to get away from it all."

Despite being away from the fast-paced life of Utah Valley only a few miles down the canyon, Whiteaker says growing a beard and kicking back has been worth it.

"We're in our third year of business and things are beginning to really jell. Irene is making some ceramics for sale, and I continue to tie flies several hours each day. Besides that, the river is only a few feet away."

Not bad for a man who only a few years ago was an executive facing the trials of other businessmen. Now he's a fishing bum and darn proud of it.



Gene Whiteaker says the canyon life suits his style of living. He gladly traded his life as a businessman for that of bait and tackle shop proprietor.

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Gene Whitaker

6 Recipes Per Person Eligible for Contest

Anyone who enters the Fifth Annual Herald Recipe Contest will be eligible to a half-rate room at the Excelsior Hotel.

Contest deadline is Monday, Aug. 27, and each contestant may submit a maximum of six recipes — one in each category.

Categories are: appetizers and specialties; vegetables and side dishes; salads; main dishes; breads, and desserts.

Following assessment of the judges as to the finalists, 30 dishes will be entered into the annual contest on Tuesday, Sept. 18 for the final cook-off and judging.

Grand prize winner will receive

a food processor and large plaque. Category winners will also receive plaques and second place winners will receive certificates of merit. The grand prize winner will be eligible to a free night of lodging at the Excelsior, and the winning recipe will be featured on the Excelsior menu.

The recipe should be typed or printed on a 3x5-inch index card, postmarked no later than Aug. 27 to The Daily Herald, P.O. Box 717, Provo, Ut. 84603. (Include name, address, telephone number and category).

The contest is open to male and female, young and old.

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